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## Key Community Issues

## Physical Character

## Natural Resources

Large land tracts  
conductive to agricul-  
tural open space

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*The needs of a growing and changing population as they relate to open space, rural areas and recreation are critical to future development. Creeping urbanization, accompanied by population growth, can threaten to encompass rural areas and cut off their access to open space. However, this development and growth can occur in an environmentally sensitive manner by protecting significant natural resources.*

*The preservation and enhancement of southern Bexar County's rural and natural character, as well as its agricultural economy promotes the health, safety and welfare of the general public and has a significant positive impact on the overall quality of life and integrity of the natural environment. These natural resources are an asset to the community in terms of aesthetic, recreational, environmental, and economic value. The preservation of farmland allows for agriculture to continue as an important industry, which contributes to the maintenance of a diverse and healthy local economy.*

### **Key Community Issues:**

*Green space corridors along waterways and roads*

*“Emerald Necklace” connection of parks, creeks, rivers and lakes*

*Preserve views, trees, historic/archeological resources*

*Do not concentrate green space, spread it throughout the area*

*Buffers around Mitchell Lake*

*Parks with amenities in the neighborhoods*

*Hike-bike trails along Medina River*

*Create hierarchy of open spaces, neighborhood parks*

*Preserve waterways and floodplains*

*Protect aquifers, wildlife habitat corridors, and natural riverbanks*

*Allow access to waterways*

*Environmental tourism at Mitchell Lake, Mission Espada, and the*

*Land Heritage Institute*

### **GOALS and OBJECTIVES**

Protect and preserve natural resources such as wetlands, streams, lakes, steep slopes, woodlands, and significant wildlife habitats.

- Identify significant waterfowl and other riparian habitats within the planning area.
- Develop a strategic implementation plan for parks and open space.

Encourage retention 100-year floodplain as natural drainage way without permanent construction, unnecessary straightening, bank clearing or channeling.

- Develop controls on alterations of the natural flood plains, their protective barriers and stream channels.
- Prevent the construction of barriers that will divert flood waters and subject other lands to greater flood hazards.

- Establish control criteria on development that would cause greater erosion or potential flood damage such as grading, dredging, excavation, and filling.
- Promote alternative stormwater management techniques that preserve the natural characteristics of significant 100 year flood plains.

Direct intense land development, including infrastructure, away from significant natural (including farms and ranches) and cultural resources (including archeological and historic sites) in order to retain the rural and historic character of the planning area.

- Reduce infrastructure, housing, and construction that require more pavement, wetland crossings, grading of trees and natural areas, and maintenance from lawn and landscaping maintenance.
- Promote the conservation of natural landscape buffers to enhance the visual experience of driving along scenic corridors.
- Provide visual relief in the urban environment through preservation of outstanding natural and built landscapes and open space development techniques.

Mitigate negative impact on important Southside natural and agricultural resources caused by new development within the area.

- Limit impervious cover for new development.
- Develop buffering requirements to filter run off water from chemicals that would be detrimental to nearby natural resources.
- Prioritize resource conservation based upon criteria such as soil quality for existing farms and other unique natural resources.
- Conservation efforts should target preserving contiguous tracts of open space and agricultural land for buffering purposes.

Develop and sustain a diversified and balanced system of public parks and recreation facilities based on community needs.

- Use linear parks to connect and serve the entire planning area, while also serving as the community focal point.
- Establish a process that encourages civic participation in the ongoing development, implementation and evaluation of the parks and recreational facilities.
- Broaden park acquisition and management priorities to include natural areas and to increase passive recreational opportunities.
- Plan and develop a system of multi-purpose linear parks and greenways.

Promote the adaptation of flood plain property as an interconnected network of parks and hike bike greenways and corridors.

- Establish criteria to identify, analyze and classify open space preservation of natural and cultural resources.
- Provide a wide variety of active and passive recreational opportunities.
- Develop criteria for high standards of access, development, use and maintenance of recreational open space.
- Identify uses that promote safety to human life, and property due to flooding and reduce the increase in flood heights or velocities.
- Develop open space areas that provide linkage between neighborhoods, parks, schools and other recreational/cultural facilities including creekway systems that can support trail development and interconnected parkways or linear parks.

## Physical Character

The existing physical character of the area is identified as flood plains, rivers, lakes, creeks, parks, ranch and farmland. The Urban Land Institute (ULI) describes the area as flat terrain with gentle slopes. Agricultural farm and ranch lands intermingle with flood plains, rivers and creeks with natural tree cover throughout the areas. Soil conditions in southern Bexar County are most conducive for farming and ranching. Rural residences are basically scattered throughout the balance of the area. Most of the denser, residential areas are closer to Loop 410 between IH 35 and IH 37.

## Existing Park Assets

There are 5 city parks within the area.

- Spicewood Park ----- 32 ac.
- Villa Coronado ----- 15 ac.
- Brown Park ----- 27 ac.
- Mission del Lago Golf Course--- 183 ac.

A City of San Antonio park, currently under development and scheduled to open by summer 2004, is located at the southernmost sector (former Applewhite Reservoir) of the Plan area:

- Medina River Park -----362 ac.

The total park area within the planning area is approximately 619 acres.



## Natural Resources

Flood plains/lakes/rivers/creeks make up approximately 14.5 square miles (9310 acres) of the planning area, consisting of four large lakes and five smaller bodies of water. These larger lakes include:

- Mitchell Lake ----- 843 ac.
- Canvasback Lake ----- 60 ac.
- Cassin Lake ----- 37 ac.
- Blue Wing Lake ----- 260 ac.

The total large lake area is 1200 acres. There are five smaller lakes which total approximately 348 acres, for a total lake area within the planning area of approximately 1548 acres.

## City South Initiative Community Plan

The four principal waterways include the:

- Medina River
- Leon Creek
- San Antonio River
- Salado Creek

All other smaller tributaries flow into these principal courses.



### Large tracts of land conducive to agricultural and open space

The planning area contains approximately 77 vacant agricultural and vacant parcels of land that are 50 acres and larger totaling 17.84 square miles (11,415.703 acres). These vacant properties are located throughout the South-side Initiative area.

Table 7 - Vacant tracks of land 50 acres or larger

